

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NWD 019004

By MRZ NARA Date 2/12/91

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY

March 18, 1971

Dear Bill:

There have been several disturbing indications that important past supporters of Safeguard in the Senate are hesitant to expose themselves this year by continuing their support if a SALT agreement could result in the tearing down of the sites already approved or being asked for. Such Senators as Jackson and Stennis have made comments to this effect.

For this reason, I want to stress the importance I attach to our new third ABM option, which was included in Gerry Smith's instructions for the current Vienna phase of SALT. It is essential that Gerry and his senior colleagues make to the Soviet representatives an early presentation of our Safeguard/Moscow proposal which conveys a sense of complete seriousness and conviction. I regard this proposal as having at least equal status with our two earlier ABM approaches.

In addition to strengthening our hand in the debate on the Defense Budget by bringing our SALT position in line with our budget requests, I consider our proposal important because of our uncertainty about the significance of the recent intelligence on Soviet ICBM construction.

I recognize that judgments have been expressed that our proposal may not be negotiable. But I am impressed by the apparent eagerness of the Soviets to stop our Safeguard from progressing to the point where they fear it might be developed into a heavier area defense. If this is really their fear, it should be in their interest to get an assurance from us that Safeguard will be stopped well short of the point from which it might be developed

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as an area defense. For this reason, I believe our new third alternative may well be of interest to them.

I have written a brief note to Gerry on this subject and would appreciate your sending it to him urgently and in a way that makes clear the great importance I attach to it.

Sincerely,



The Honorable William P. Rogers
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

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